

This Week in Congress

September 20, 2010

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I returned to Washington, D.C. this week after the August district work period.

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Protecting Veterans' Second Amendment Rights

This week, the House Veterans Affairs Committee approved legislation I introduced to protect the Second Amendment rights of veterans. H.R. 2547, the Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act will reform the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) process that arbitrarily strips the Second Amendment rights from veterans who receive assistance managing their financial affairs. Under current VA practice, veterans and other VA beneficiaries who have a fiduciary appointed to act on their behalf, are deemed "mentally defective" and are reported to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Although a veteran may pose no danger to anyone, being listed in the NICS prevents the veteran from possessing and purchasing firearms.

I introduced the Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act to make sure veterans are not unfairly denied the rights they fought so bravely to defend. It is wrong to take away veterans' gun rights simply because they cannot manage their finances. My legislation corrects this problem by requiring a judicial authority to determine that a veteran poses a danger to themselves or others before the VA may send their names to the NICS. [Click here](#) to read more about this legislation that was added as an amendment to a veterans benefit measure in committee.

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Working to Protect Kansas Farmers and Businesses

On Tuesday, the U.S. Senate rejected two different proposals to eliminate or reduce the burden associated with a new tax reporting requirement in President Obama's health care law. Under the President's health care law, beginning in 2012, businesses will be required to file a 1099 report with the IRS every time they make a purchase of more than \$600 within a tax year. This means that farmers and other businesses will have to provide 1099 forms for basic business expenses such as phone and internet service, feed and fuel, shipping costs and office supplies. This new reporting requirement will burden businesses with onerous and costly paperwork requirements, and drive up the cost of doing business.

In May, I sponsored H.R. 5141, the Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act, to eliminate this unprecedented tax reporting burden. On Thursday, I signed a discharge petition to force the House of Representatives to bring H.R. 5141 to the floor for consideration. For the discharge petition to be successful, it must have the signatures of 218 representatives. Flooding businesses with paperwork is not the way to put people back to work during these challenging times.

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Supporting Rural Hospitals Across America

As Co-Chairmen of the House Rural Health Care Coalition, Congressman Earl Pomeroy of North Dakota, and I, authored a bipartisan letter this week, requesting that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) re-evaluate its regulation regarding physician supervision of outpatient therapeutic services. Our letter was signed by 67 Members of the House, and was delivered to CMS on Friday.

The new rule would require that a physician be present for certain outpatient therapeutic services, like blood transfusions, which now can be performed by other qualified medical professionals pursuant to a physician's orders. I am concerned that this proposed change could force rural hospitals across our country to limit services. Many Kansas hospitals will find it very difficult to meet this supervision requirement and may have to cut services. This regulation does not make sense for Kansas and I continue to implore CMS to be flexible to the unique characteristics of rural health care. [Click here](#) to view a copy of the letter.

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Honoring "Spirit of Service Award" Winner Col. Gary LaGrange

On Monday, I spoke at an event to honor retired Army Colonel Gary LaGrange of Manhattan for receiving the 2010 Spirit of Service Award from the Corporation for National and Community Service. Col. LaGrange was recognized as the most outstanding participant in the Corporation's Senior Corps program for his work in creating "Help us Learn...Give us Hope." Inspired by a request from a Big Red One soldier in Baghdad in 2008, Col LaGrange formed this non-profit organization to collect and send school supplies to U.S. troops serving overseas. Our troops then distribute the supplies to Iraqi, Afghan and African school children.

These educational materials are in high demand and are desperately needed in countries like Afghanistan, where more than 70 percent of the population over age 15 is illiterate. To date, more than 520,000 pounds of school supplies and 540,000 pounds of books have been donated. More than 300,000 children have received supplies through the organization. This effort is not only making a difference in the lives of children, but it also generates goodwill towards the United States and our mission in these countries.

I congratulate and commend Col. LaGrange for his service and leadership. He sets an example for us all, in demonstrating that one person can make a difference and make our world better.

[Click here](#)

to visit the "Help us Learn...Give us Hope" website to learn how you can help.

[Click here](#)

to learn more about the award.

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to view a photo from the event.



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Remembering Norman Jeter of Hays

This week, I joined members of the Ellis County Bar and friends and family of Norman Jeter to celebrate his life. This ceremony was part of a long-standing tradition among Ellis County Bar

members, who gather together one year after a members passes away to pay tribute to that individual. Remarks are gathered into a permanent record at the court.

Norman impacted the lives of countless Kansans during the seven decades he lived in Hays. His dedication to the legal profession and his knowledge of the law were respected across Kansas. Throughout his lifetime, Norman worked to improve the quality of life in Hays and across Kansas. Thanks in part to his vision and hard work, today, Hays is a thriving community and the commercial hub of Northwest Kansas.

Norman was an instrumental part of merging St. Anthony's Hospital and Hadley Regional Medical Center in 1991 to create what is now the Hays Medical Center. Hays Med created the "Norman W. Jeter Humanitarian Award" in his honor, which is the highest level of recognition that an associate of Hays Med can receive. The Award recognizes an individual's human kindness and dedication to medical excellence.

Norman was also dedicated to the education our children receive in Kansas. He served as a member and Chair of the Kansas Board of Regents. This nine-member board was established in 1925 and is charged with overseeing the state's public and higher education system.

Norman Jeter was not only a man of great achievements, but a man of great character. He led a truly remarkable life of service to his family and our community, and changed lives for the better across Kansas.

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Visiting Veterans Clinic and Medical Facilities in Wyandotte County

On Friday, I visited the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Wyandotte Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) at the Bethany Medical Building in Kansas City. The Wyandotte VA CBOC is a medical center that provides a variety of primary care services to veterans. Touring veterans' medical facilities across Kansas allows me to see firsthand how our veterans are being cared for. Thanks to Judy McKee, Director of Leavenworth VA Medical Center for giving me a tour of the facility.

In addition to the Wyandotte VA CBOC, Bethany Medical Building houses two other important health care facilities serving Kansans: Swope Health Wyandotte and Turner House Children's Clinic. Swope Health Wyandotte, a part of Swope Health Services, provides primary health care, outreach and behavioral health services to residents throughout the greater Kansas City area. Swope Health Services cares for more than 55,000 patients annually through eight treatment locations. More than 90 percent of these patients live below the poverty level. Thanks to Jimmy Brown, VP for Corporate Services and Community Affairs, for his hospitality during my visit.

Turner House Children's Clinic offers health care for children who are uninsured or have Kansas Medicaid or HealthWave. By the end of 2009, the clinic had provided care to more than 4,000 children during nearly 10,000 visits. Thanks to Roger Lambson, Executive Director and Alena Leal, Clinic Director, for informing me about the good work done every day at Turner House for thousands of Kansas children.

These three facilities make up a significant health care safety net serving many Kansans. Thanks to Jerry Lunn for coordinating my visit and thanks to the staff at all three facilities for giving me a tour. Thanks also to Joe Connor, Director of the Public Health Department for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, for updating me on the status of health care services in the area.

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U.S. Support Needed to Ensure Peace in Sudan

Since visiting Darfur and Southern Sudan in 2007, I have advocated for the victims of conflict in this war-torn country in Africa. This week, I sponsored legislation that encourages United States

involvement in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The CPA was signed in 2005 and ended more than 20 years of conflict between the government of Sudan, based in the north of the country, and groups in the south. The CPA set forth various conditions for the democratic transformation of Sudan, including a requirement that a referendum be held in January 2011 in which Southern Sudanese voters will decide whether to remain part of a united Sudan or to secede and become an independent country.

Sudan is at a critical point as it approaches the referendum vote in January. American involvement and support increase the likelihood that the vote will be fair, that peace will be achieved and that human rights will be respected. [Click here](#) to read more about my visit to Sudan in 2007.

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Speaking at Geary County Farm Bureau Meeting

On Tuesday evening, I met with members of the Geary County Farm Bureau during their annual meeting in Junction City. I had the privilege of speaking to Farm Bureau members about the importance of preserving our farming and ranching traditions for future generations of Kansans.

Agriculture plays a critical role in our everyday lives as Kansans, but it also plays a critical role in the lives of those who are far removed from its practice. It is vital that elected and appointed officials in Washington D.C. understand the important role of Kansas farmers and ranchers. Farm Bureau has been a champion of this effort for many years.

Among those in attendance were Kansas Senator Roger Reitz, Kansas Representative Barbara Craft, City Manager Gerry Vernon, County Commissioner Ben Bennett, County Commissioner and 65th House District Candidate Larry Hicks, 65th House District Candidate Jim Fawcett and Kansas Farm Bureau 5th District Director Craig Stephenson. Thanks to Geary County Farm Bureau President Phillip Boller, Vice President Don Carrier and County Coordinator Lisa Bledsoe for their kindness and hospitality at the event. [Click here](#) to view a photo from the meeting.



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